Chapter 3
Album Cover Design

Abstract This chapter concerns album cover design. After an initial discussion of the album covers produced for bands such as The Beatles, Cream, Led Zeppelin, The Cure, Sex Pistols, The Rolling Stones, Kanye West, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and others, I conduct case studies of contemporary British band Bear's Den's approach to album cover design and Australian singer–songwriter Dustin Tebbutt's work with Jefferton James. I argue that album covers are often the starting point for the development of a musician's design culture.

Keywords Album cover design · Design culture · Visual storytelling

3.1 Designer Unknown: A Canon of Album Covers

In 2018, I attended the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) exhibition MoMA at NGV: 130 Years of Modern and Contemporary Art, an exhibition that was presented in Melbourne, Australia in partnership with the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA. Branded as the 2018 iteration of the annual Melbourne Winter Masterpieces exhibition series, the artworks chosen for display constituted a survey of the MoMA's iconic collection. Amongst the over 200 key art and design works on display were album cover designs/artworks. These included German designer Klaus Voormann and British photographer Robert Whitaker's (1966) album cover design for The Beatles' album *Revolver*, Australian illustrator Martin Sharp and British photographer Robert Whitaker's (1967) album cover design for Cream's album *Disraeli gears*, London-based art design studio Hipgnosis and British designers Storm Thorgerson and Audrey Powells' (1973) album cover for Led Zeppelin's album *Houses of the holy*, and American artist Andy Warhol, American photographer Billy Name, American designer Craig Braun and British typographer John Pasche's (1971) album cover for The Rolling Stones' album *Sticky fingers.*[1] (Fig. 3.1).

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[1]The MoMA at NGV|NGV (2018) exhibition provides a useful entry point for a discussion of the canon of album cover designs. For a broader discussion of this canon of work, see Spampinato (2017). Spampinato examined the relationship between visual and music production since the rise of modernism and he included Luigi Russolo's 1913 Futurist manifesto L'Arte dei Rumori (The Art of Noise), Marcel Duchamp's 1925 double-sided discs Rotoreliefs, Banksy's stencilled graffiti for the

Fig. 3.1 Jefferton James,
album cover design for
Australian Band Hey
Geronimo's album *Content.*
Copyright Hey Geronimo

Then, in a different section of the chronologically arranged exhibition, were tour,
single, album and film promotion posters. These included British designers Pearl
Thompson and Andy Vella's (1985) poster for The Cure's album *Head on the door*,
British designer Jamie Reid's (1979) poster for the Sex Pistols's soundtrack and
film *The great rock 'n' roll swindle*, British designers Peter Saville and Trevor Key's
(1989) poster for the New Order single 'Fine time' (after a painting by Richard Bern-
stein), and designer unknown and Spanish photographer Rocco Redondo's (1980)
poster for The Clash's album *Black market Clash.*

The fact that The Clash poster on display was attributed to 'designer unknown'
highlights the status of this particular music-related artwork. The poster can be
displayed in this type of exhibition alongside masterworks by Vincent van Gogh,
Paul Gauguin, Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Marcel Duchamp and
Frida Kahlo, yet the status of the visual creative who designed The Clash's poster is
such that no one knows who did the work. This issue of a lack of attribution for visual
creatives who work in the music industries arose frequently throughout the research
that was conducted for this book. The status of visual creatives within the music busi-
ness arguably hinges on whether their work is considered to be advertising or art.
For example, in his editorial concerning 'artists' who designed album covers, Tillery
(2017) noted that 'At their best, record covers double as artworks'. For Tillery, these
include Andy Warhol's 'endlessly-reproduced' banana for The Velvet Underground

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band Blur, Damien Hirst's synecdoche skull for the band The Hours, and a skewered Salvador Dali
butterfly on Jackie Gleason's *Lonesome echo* album in his overview of 500 album cover designs.

and Nico album,[2] Takashi Murakami's (2007) design for Kanye West's album *Graduation*, Urs Fischer's (2009) 'cracking egg' photograph for the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' album *It's blitz!*, Keith Haring's (1983) artwork for David Bowie's single 'Without you'[3] and Raymond Pettibon's (1979) illustration for Black Flag's album *Nervous breakdown*. By positing this canon of work, Tillery (2017) implies that only some album covers can be considered 'art' that was created by 'artists'.

Therefore, was the designer of The Clash's poster on display not credited because the poster was simply viewed as an advertisement for the band's album *Black market clash* and it has been only retrospectively reconceptualised as art? The title card for the poster display at the MoMA NGV exhibition read:

> These posters, all designed in a punk spirit, would have been sent out to record shops, inserted in albums or distributed at clubs and gigs. As a group, they exhibit the anarchic experimentation, crude collage aesthetic and abrasive imagery, often pornographic or macabre in nature, of a movement opposed to establishment values and the perceived blandness of commercial pop music. (MoMA at NGV|NGV 2018)

The British punk and post-punk movements that began in the late 1970s represent a useful starting point for this chapter. Through an engagement with Julier's (2017) aforementioned concept of design culture, I argue that in the contemporary music business, rather than simply *promoting* albums in record stores, album cover designs assume a more central and complex role due to the ubiquity of their presence in the online environment and, through a process of brand stewardship/design culturing, they often come to operate in three-dimensional space as, at least part of, stage designs, merchandise designs and music videos. This is arguably reminiscent of the way in which punk and post-punk artists 'asserted their creativity as musicians, performers and designers of fashion and graphics, at times combining several of these roles' (MoMA at NGV|NGV 2018). Contemporary album cover design is influenced by, and often actively shapes, the actual music itself, as well as the physical space in which the music is performed.

That the punk and post-punk posters originally designed to promote tours, singles, albums and films in record stores and live music venues were on display at the MoMA at NGV|NGV 2018 visual art exhibition is evidence that punk rock has travelled full circle: it began as an anti-music project that was inspired by anti-art movements such as Dadaism, and it is now being displayed alongside Marcel Duchamp's *Bicycle wheel* (2013) at the NGV. Authors such as Wicke (1990) and Rogan (1988) have referred

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[2]According to Gardner (2013), The Velvet Underground and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts agreed to confidentially settle a dispute over the iconic cover art for the 1967 album *The Velvet Underground & Nico*. Gardner (2013) noted that the Andy Warhol-created artwork became the 'subject of legal controversy after reports circulated that the Foundation planned to license the design for iPod and iPad ancillary products. In January 2012, Velvet Underground … sued in New York federal court with the claim that the artwork had become 'a symbol, truly an icon, of the Velvet Underground' for decades. This case highlights the need to rethink and redesign how album art is managed within the music business.

[3]Bowie's single 'Without you' was also one of the songs on his 15th studio album *Let's dance*, which was also released in 1983.

to the work of the Sex Pistols manager, Malcolm McLaren, in order to discuss this connection. In the context of a discussion of the way in which the Sex Pistols fulfilled the attributes of 'anti-music', Wicke (1990) stated:

> It was the concept of the band's manager, Malcolm McLaren, for whom this represented the carefully prepared conversion of an avant-garde art project. McLaren professed the art philosophy of the 'International Situationists', an (anti-)art concept which grew up in France in the fifties in relation to Paris Dadaism and which experienced a renaissance in British art schools in the sixties, while McLaren himself was studying at St Martin's School of Art. (p. 135)

Wicke claimed that punk as a musical concept did not arise 'on the streets', but was instead the product of McLaren's artistic ambitions. He argued that although, for some, punk rock was the direct musical expression of unemployed teenagers' political protest against a society that had turned them into 'outsiders', these associations actually came later (see Osborne 2015). And while for others it was a particularly cunning capitalist subterfuge to overcome the decline in the record market caused by a recession in the UK (Harker 1980), this association was in fact a contextual one. In contrast, Wicke (1990) posited that ultimately punk was derivative of the art philosophy of the 'International Situationists' and was an anti-music movement that mirrored an anti-art concept used by Paris-based Dadaists in the 1950s. In this way, a movement in visual art actively shaped punk music itself.

The question of whether album cover designs are artworks or are simply advertisements becomes complicated when they are considered within the context of the pop art movement.[4] The curators of the MoMA at NGV|NGV 2018 exhibition certainly considered them to be part of this movement; the aforementioned Cream, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin and The Rolling Stones album covers were displayed alongside Andy Warhol's *Marilyn Monroe* series (1967), with Roy Lichtenstein's *Drowning girl* (1963) displayed on the opposite wall. In a research interview for this book, Los Angeles-based music executive Vince Bannon (Chief Executive Officer of music and social media start-up So.Co)[5] mused on the topic of whether album art should be seen as advertising or art:

> Well that's an interesting stand because you could sit there and you can say 'all great art is basically advertising' in the sense that all the renaissance painters … were doing it for a big corporation: the church … and Warhol really blended advertising and art … I would definitely say that a major piece of [popular music] was the album art. (Interview 10)

This discussion of the blending of advertising and art evokes the art versus commerce debate (see Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 81). As a form of graphic design,

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[4]See Spampinato (2017) for a broader discussion of how art movements such as pop art, modernism, conceptual art, post-modernism and various forms of contemporary art practice have informed the field of album cover design. With 500 covers and records that were produced to support the mass distribution of music, Spampinato's text provides a broad outline of the canon of album cover designs that is beyond the scope of this chapter to address.

[5]Canadian-born Vince Bannon founded Detroit, USA-based concert promotion company Ritual (which was subsequently sold to Clear Channel Entertainment) and has also worked as a senior executive at Sony Music, and as an executive at Getty Images.

album covers involve art that is *for* commerce, though such designs are arguably not as commercial as other forms of graphic design because they are *for* music. Therefore, within this chapter, concepts of aesthetic/creative autonomy, or a lack thereof, are relevant because the designer is designing *for* someone else. And yet despite this subservience to *someone else* when designers do their work well, their outputs can combine with the music to produce a third artefact that is greater than the sum of its parts.[6] Furthermore, album cover designs are often the first point of contact for music, even before consumers have listened to the music itself. Before purchasing or streaming music, people who are consuming music legally, for the most part, initially have to view album cover designs. The omnipresent graphic design environment of the music business shapes consumers' interpretations and expectations of the music itself in a way that is reminiscent of Dadaism's influence on punk and post-punk music.

The field of album cover design has also had an impact on the broader field of graphic design. As FitzGerald and VanderLans (2010) noted:

> It's unavoidable to include music when considering many of the prominent figures and movements in graphic design. Design for music has set trends in the field for decades. Reid Miles's album covers for the famous Blue Note jazz label created a form language that suffuses all areas of design production. Many designers who employ Miles's stylistic features are unaware of their origin. (p. 13)

Therefore, album cover design has historically had a significant impact on design cultures other than those relating to music.

3.2 Album Covers: The Starting Point for a Musician's Design Culture

Album cover designs are often the starting point for the development of a musical artist's design culture and they are therefore the starting point for this book. While initially designed to represent an album of songs, through a process of brand stewardship/design culturing, album cover designs also often subsequently operate in three-dimensional space as the key design concept(s) used for gig and tour posters, and as (part of) stage designs, merchandise designs, music videos and XR design objects. Discussing album art as the starting point for his clients' brand stewardship and resultant design culture, London-based artist manager Rowan Brand[7] (Tribe

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[6]In a parallel with the world of opera, my colleague at the University of Melbourne, Dr. Brian Long pointed out that Richard Wagner had his idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*: the idea that stage design and text were as important to opera as was the music. For Wagner, good design could combine with good music to produce a third artefact that is greater than the sum of its parts.

[7]Rowan Brand and I co-managed the Australian band Boy and Bear from 2008 through 2012.

Management) gave the example of his client Bear's Den's[8] work with London-based visual creative Ross Stirling (Studio Juice):

> Think of it like an hourglass: we take a lot of different ideas and we gradually narrow them down and centralise them into a very specific, narrow and often singular album cover design. Then out of that central funnel point we proliferate all the other visual things that we need. It involves trying to get down to a specific identity or series of identities that all relate to one another and then extrapolating that into different expressions. I would say that the pinch point in the hourglass is the album cover design, being a central and leading image in the visual campaign of an artist. (Interview 16)

The reason why album cover designs are so pivotal for the design culture surrounding a musical artist's work simply relates to the chronology of the musician or band's creative process. Brand continued:

> Music videos and set design are part of that funnelling out process and that's usually because of the chronology of how an artist's album cycle works. The album has to be recorded and then the vinyl has to be pressed and the album has to be designed, and you then announce the album, then you start to reveal the visual work and the tour comes later. Usually the stage design is not the first to begin; it usually comes out of that look. (Interview 16)

This design culture and its associated processes lead to Bear's Den's album cover designs functioning in interdisciplinary ways, becoming ubiquitous in and around their recorded music and live performances, in both digital and physical contexts. Album cover designs are therefore often the starting point for the process of visual storytelling that plays out across an artist's album cycle, or even their entire career (Figs. 3.2 and 3.3).

3.3 Visual Storytelling

On Saturday 16 September 2017, I attended The Rolling Stones' concert at the Red Bull Ring Motorsport racetrack in Spielberg, Austria, an event that was attended by approximately 95,003 other people (No Filter Boxscore 2018). The concert formed part of the band's #StonesNoFilter 2017/2018 tour of Europe and the UK. According to Rutherford (2018), the tour grossed US$237,802,307, with 1,506,219 tickets sold and 28 sold-out shows. The concert I attended grossed US$11,202,349 (Rutherford 2018).
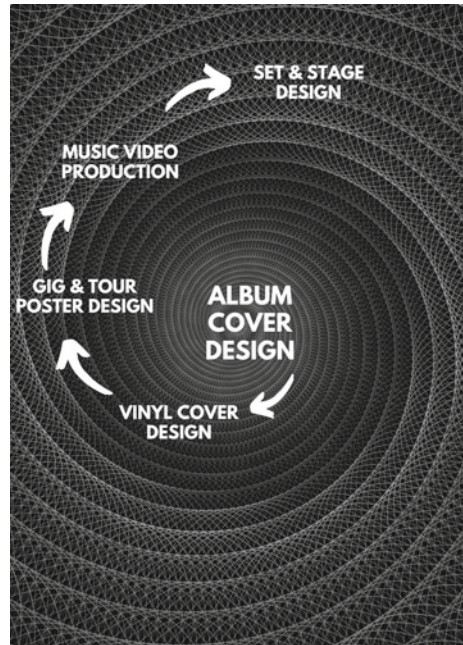
After heavy rain on the morning of the event, the clouds cleared and the sun started to dry out what ended up being a very muddy arena. The Rolling Stones' 'Tongue and Lip' logo was everywhere, on the T-shirts of the mud-stained fans, on the plastic 'keep cups' used to serve beer, and later on, when the band performed, it formed a key element of the stage design. Originally designed by British typographer John Pasche, the design was later revised by American designer Craig Braun for the

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[8]Bear's Den is a British folk-rock band from London, formed in 2012. They have released three studio albums to date (Bear's Den 2019).

Bear's Den

Fig. 3.2 Cover design for Bear's Den's third album *So that you may hear me.* Copyright Bear's Den

aforementioned *Sticky fingers* album package; it was reproduced on the inside sleeve of the album that was released in April 1971 (Coscarelli 2015). The logo has been used ever since and has become a visual shorthand for the band. Discussing the process for generating the idea for the logo, Pasche said:

> Mick had a picture of Kali, the Hindu goddess … but I thought something like that might go out of date. I wanted something anti-authority … the mouth idea came from when I met Jagger … the first thing you were aware of was the size of his lips and his mouth. (Pasche, as cited in Coscarelli 2015)

Fig. 3.3 Design culture production often starts with the album cover design

Pasche was a 24-year-old postgraduate design student at London's Royal College of
Art at the time when, according to Coscarelli (2015), Mick Jagger was looking for
new talent and approached him directly to design the logo. In terms of the business
transactions surrounding this design, Walker (2008) noted:

> Initially paid just 50 lb ([US]$76 at current rates) for the design, Mr. Pasche sold his copyright
> to the band for £26,000 (about [US]$40,000 at the time) in 1984. In 2008, the Victoria and
> Albert Museum in London bought his original artwork for £50,000 ([US]$92,500).

In contrast to Pasche's eventual remuneration for the design, Walker continued by
noting that, while Braun subsequently established a merchandising company called
Licks which used an alternate version of the logo and paid The Rolling Stones a
small royalty, the business was ahead of its time. Given that The Rolling Stones'
merchandising interests now allegedly generate billions of dollars, Braun is quoted
as having said, 'I should have stayed in the business' (as cited in Walker 2008).

The Tongue and Lip logo had a presence beyond the various merchandise items
that were worn by the multigenerational audience that I observed in attendance at
the concert in Spielberg. During the tour, the landing page for The Rolling Stones'
website featured user-generated content (Rolling Stones 2017). Live footage filmed
on smart phones and still photography generated by fans, often featuring the Tongue
and Lip logo, dominated the website. The motorcar company Jeep, the major sponsor
of the tour, also had their logo displayed. This logo sat unexpectedly comfortably
alongside the Tongue and Lip, despite the Stones' logo originally being designed

to represent an anti-authoritarian stance. In fact, the two different iterations of the design being used on the website and on the beer, soft drink and spirits-filled keep cups at the event were yellow and red, and black and red: the same colour schemes used by McDonald's restaurants and by Coca Cola.

A key question here is: What exactly is the story that the (immensely profitable) design culture of The Rolling Stones' business telling? To answer this question, it is useful to go back to the early stages of the band's career and to consider the visual intelligence of the band's first manager and producer, Andrew Loog Oldham, who managed the band from 1963 to 1967 (Oldham 2000). Oldham's visual intelligence was pivotal in The Rolling Stones being positioned as the anti-thesis to The Beatles; he, along with photographer Gered Mankowitz, is arguably responsible for the band's early visual (photographic) representation as 'bad boys' (see Oldham 2000, 2003) and for the publicity campaign that enabled this image to be established, encapsulated in the headline: 'Would you let your daughter marry a Rolling Stone?' (Oldham 2000). In an interview for this book, Sydney and New York-based artist manager and record label executive John Watson (Eleven Music) noted: 'The Rolling Stones was a visual contrivance by Andrew Loog Oldham and Gered Mankowitz … He's a really famous photographer … that was a deliberate look that they created' (Interview 6).

The Rolling Stones' Tongue and Lip logo stems from the design culture originally contrived by Andrew Loog Oldham, Gered Mankowitz and The Rolling Stones members themselves and it visually tells an anti-establishment 'story' of rebellion and is symbolic of the 1960s countercultural movement. Watson continued:

> He [Andrew Loog Oldham] was the one that came up with the non-matching suits thing so they had a counterpoint to The Beatles. He was the one that came up with the out of focus photos things, the don't smile in your photos, you know, all of that. And really the whole thing is about storytelling. (Interview 6)

The networks of interaction between design, production and consumption that constitute a musician or band's design culture ideally tell a story in a multisensory way: through the music, the album art, the gig posters, the photos, the press articles, and, in a tactile way, through stage designs, merchandise items and the design of performance spaces. Further discussing the process of storytelling through a musician or band's design culture, Watson elaborated:

> The visuals are but one component of a story; people buy into the story of an artist. They buy into Bruce Springsteen, the working-class kid from New Jersey. They buy into 'Would you let your daughter marry a Rolling Stone?' They buy into Ozzie Osborne biting the head off a bat. So when you talk about branding it's then about alignment to that story. Do the visuals reinforce that story? Does it match the lyrics? Does it match who the artist seems to be when they talk? Does it match where they play and who they play with and the issues on which they take a stand and what their videos look like, and what their artwork looks like? (Interview 6)

One obvious, yet important, point to make here is that the networks of interaction between design, production and consumption in the contemporary digital environment function differently to the way they did during Oldham's tenure managing The

Rolling Stones (1963–67). Rather than an artist manager, or using Bourdieu's (1986) term 'intermediary', such as Andrew Loog Oldham controlling and helping to create the visual identity of a band through the traditional media, in the digital environment musicians often start to build their visual identity and associated design culture themselves. They do this by releasing their music and accompanying imagery directly to fans via digital means.

3.4   Digital Visual Creativities

Digital visual storytelling is more interactive and is more consistently, or frequently, fundamental to musical artists' creative processes. It is more agile, iterative, initially direct-to-fan, and it involves faster processes that require more content due to a broad paradigm shift from linear career development to circular career development (see Hughes et al. 2016).[9] Watson continued:

> One of the great things about the modern music business is that artists can do more for themselves than ever before. The flip side of that same coin is that artists have to do more for themselves than ever before, so more and more artists are creating their own visuals. Not just in the sense of their album artwork or their music videos, but in terms of the photos that become the iconic picture in people's minds. When you say 'Sia' you think of that photo of her in the wig … [The Beatles' album cover design] Sergeant Pepper's, that's Peter Blake [and Jann Haworth]. So now more and more is coming from the artist. (Interview 6)

While according to Coscarelli (2015), Mick Jagger was the one who sought out John Pasche directly to design the Tongue and Lip logo, in the post-digital environment, musical artists themselves are necessarily also required to be visually creative. Watson argued:

> With the younger artists, this is typically not seen as an imposition or a burden. It's seen as an opportunity. They see it as a fantastic additional channel of expression … The ability to pop photos on Instagram every day is not like eating your greens and doing your homework, it's fun in the same way as busting out a new tune is, or sharing a playlist of all the stuff you've listened to this month and any number of other forms of sharing yourself with the world, which is, at one level, what it means to be an artist. So they see the visuals now as an important extension of their creative self-expression. (Interview 6)

While earlier publications within the field of popular music studies tended to discuss the use of design within the music business in terms of the promotional efforts of major record companies (see Goodwin 1992; Middleton 1990; Negus 1992), the circuit of culture stemming from, and revolving around, album cover designs in the

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[9]In my earlier co-written work (Hughes, Evans, Morrow and Keith 2016), we argued that there has been a paradigm shift from linear to circular career development in what we refer to as the 'new music industries'. As I outlined in Morrow (2018b) until quite recently, musicians sought attention from industry gatekeepers first and this is what is meant by *linear* career development (artist–industry–industry–industry–fan). *Circular* career development is an inversion of this process. It features the artist sharing his/her music online with potential fans/consumers first to see if it resonates.

post-digital context is more likely, initially at least, to be generated and sustained by musical artists directly (Hughes et al. 2016). The networks of interaction that constitute a musician's design culture engage the audience for the music at an earlier stage of musical and visual development. Visual content is also then used to consistently keep the attention of the audience in an effort to extend the life cycle of the project for as long as possible. According to one interviewee, London-based entrepreneur Caroline Bottomley (founder of Radar Music Video and Shiny Awards), the design culture surrounding recorded music in the post-digital environment has become somewhat of a hungry beast:

> The marketing process demands a different kind of content strategy now, so there isn't that release, great big activity and then drop-off. It is a slower build-up to the release, keep that going, keep that going for as long as you possibly can. So dance labels in particular will look at a release strategy that just keeps on for a year, two years, and even longer if they can keep it going. To keep that marketing strategy up there, they need content to keep pumping out into the different platforms. (Interview 17)

An obvious challenge in the post-digital environment is that not all musicians also possess visual and design culture-related creative confidence. While some do have this type of creative confidence in abundance and can therefore service this increased demand themselves, thereby achieving consistency across the portfolio of work that forms their design culture, other musicians may not be blessed with the same level of visual intelligence or creative confidence. Some musicians simply do not have an interest in the visual side of the music business and its associated design culture. Discussing this issue, interviewee Rowan Brand commented:

> It actually depends on what types of creativity the artist is interested in and how the artist is wanting to express themselves. I think there are some artists who are very gifted and talented and interested in the visual as well as the sonic. So, those artists naturally are self-motivated to look at the world around them and express it visually or represent it. [They] might be a keen photographer and take pictures on the road. There are other artists who I think are not wired that way and are interested in other forms of creativity and struggle to express themselves visually. In which case, it's my job as a manager to connect those people with visual artists or people who are gifted in the visual world to help express those ideas and concepts and build the world around it. (Interview 16)

The collaboration between musicians and the visual creatives that they and/or their management engage to help create the design culture that stems from their music can be immensely challenging.

3.5 Clash of the 'Liberal Artists'

In my earlier work, Morrow (2018a), I discussed the fact that the artist manager is managing the 'concrete and named labour of the artist' (Ryan 1992, p. 41). This means there is a direct connection between the person/musician they are managing and the product of the musician's work. They are therefore managing someone who

may 'over-identify' with their work.[10] The work of the musician is therefore a type of creative labour that 'resists the abstractness and alienation that Marx attributes to pretty much all other work under capitalism' (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 84). This 'causes a constant problem for capitalist businesses' (p. 84). The challenge for the visual creative who collaborates with a musician to design an album cover is that their labour is *not* 'concrete and named'; they are designing *for* the musician whose name will remain attached to the resulting design. Therefore, in this way, the designer's creative labour is subject to the aforementioned abstractness and alienation of work under capitalism. This dynamic is encapsulated in the following interview data. Rowan Brand discussed the challenge of

> Finding talent to connect an artist [musician] with and to help foster that connection so that the transfer of the artist's vision of their career and vision of their art is expressed in a form that they would find exciting, acceptable and supportive of their overall vision, even if they didn't come up with it themselves. (Interview 16)

The fact that the designer is often in a subservient position in the collaborative relationship with the musician can cause creative/productive conflict (see Morrow 2018a, pp. 58–61), which can quickly escalate from task-based conflict to relationship-based conflict and process-based conflict (see Kurtzberg and Amabile 2001, p. 290). While some task-based conflict can be beneficial to the output of the relationship between the musician/band and the designer, 'too much of it can become counterproductive (Jehn 1995), and relationship-based conflict and process-based conflict are both damaging to groups' (Morrow 2018a, p. 61). Discussing collaboration from the perspective of the designer within the general field of graphic design, FitzGerald and VanderLans (2010) surmised:

> As no military plan survives contact with the enemy, no design concept survives contact with the client. Both situations feature laboriously (if not lovingly) crafted plans blown away by reality. The endgames differ in that designers define victory as gaining that initial approval … to change course because of someone's uninformed opinion can be galling … The favored client is one that gets out of the way. Otherwise, for designers (and generals), resistance is to be overcome. (p. 42)

Discussing the nature of his collaborations with musicians and bands when designing album covers, and the fact that musicians and bands themselves are increasingly responsible for creating, co-creating and/or funding the creation of their own visual identity and design culture, my client, Jefferton James, noted:

> It's a double-edged sword of there being more control with the musician because you can have a direct line of communication with the person you're working with and you can find an even ground. That way you're not pleasing half a dozen different people for the same result. You're only pleasing the one. But then the flip side of that is pleasing the one can sometimes be harder than pleasing the many. There's a tendency with some musicians and

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[10]Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011, p. 149) discussed the fact that it is a problem when creative labourers over-identify with their work because their career is fragile and uncertain. Being highly personally and emotionally invested in something so fragile and fleeting can lead to mental health issues, hence the term 'over'-identify.

people you collaborate with for overthinking because it's not the speediest process … the best result usually comes from being on the same page from the outset and just sticking to that through to the finish line. (Interview 1)

A key concept that informs the nature of the collaboration between a musician/band and a designer is the artistic/aesthetic autonomy of the artist. While the notion of the autonomous artist or 'liberal artist' (Wiseman-Trowse 2008) often informs the contributions of the musician or band to the collaborative process because it is *their* album, it can be difficult for the designer to let go of this concept themselves. This can cause tension in the relationship. This issue is encapsulated in the following quotation from FitzGerald and VanderLans (2010):

Though compromise is a fact of life, it's a troublesome topic in our individualistic culture. Graphic design's stature as art to its practitioners (however strident claims to the contrary may be), and the popular view of art as 'self-expression,' makes compromise akin to selling out … Too often, client input is regarded as a de facto detriment, irrespective of content. And freewheeling, personal aesthetic achievement is regarded as design's highest prize. (pp. 43–44)

In the case of Jefferton James's collaborations with his clients, the fact that Jefferton views himself as a liberal artist is evidenced by his claim that musicians are 'just using a different paintbrush than I am' (Interview 1). Discussing the tension that ensues as two supposedly 'liberal' artists attempt to collaborate, Jefferton continued:

If they're self-managed it's very much them putting up the money towards whatever the project is so they want a huge amount of input and they usually have a much clearer idea of what they want. So in that respect it's easier from the outset. At the finish line sometimes it's harder because they'll say, 'I want it to be like this.' And the creative side of me is going, 'No, I think that will diminish the end result if we do it like this.' But they've always got the trump card of, 'Yes, but I'm paying for this job so my opinion kind of outweighs yours.' And it's finding that middle ground, that safe spot where you can say, 'I think the project will benefit the most from both of us meeting at this point', not at being 100% your idea or 100% my idea but finding that sweet spot between the two. (Interview 1)

Conflict often arises between designers such as Jefferton and musicians/bands due to the fact that both parties view themselves as liberal artists. Designers often feel micromanaged by the bands who hire them to create, or help to create, their visual identity and the design culture stemming from it.

3.6   Participant Observations

As a participant observer in these processes, I observed that it is often one particular member of a band who takes the lead in the design process. The designer can then come to feel micromanaged by this member, to the extent that the relationship deteriorates and the designer does not finish the job. I observed one such collaborative process in May 2018 in Sydney, Australia.

On 29 May 2018, Jefferton James and I met with a Sydney-based band[11] to pitch for the opportunity to design their album cover. The band had already worked with another designer who had generated a complete album cover and packaging design but they had since decided not to proceed with those design ideas. Jefferton and I met with the band at 4 pm at a hotel in Sydney. In advance of the meeting, the band's manager called me to discuss pricing of music videos as well as the album cover design in case the conversation progressed in the meeting past album cover design and packaging to music video production. The manager of the band was comfortable with the price range offered. All quotations/pricing, logistics and options on production types or genres—performance video through to narrative/concept video—were discussed in advance of the face-to-face meeting. The face-to-face meeting itself ended up being solely focused on visual concepts.

Jefferton hastily pulled together a mood board of ideas in the hour before the meeting to pitch to the client/band. The mood board consisted of reference images for colour schemes and photos of particular compositions that were used as a springboard to discuss the overall concepts the band had for their album cover. These were generated in response to a detailed brief that the band's management sent to me to send onto Jefferton in advance of the meeting. The meeting with the band began with light banter concerning where we had travelled from to get to the hotel. The band drank cocktails and offered us drinks. I accepted (a beer); Jefferton did not. We mentioned that Jefferton produces music videos and set designs, as well as album art, in an attempt to up-sell future services.

At one stage, Jefferton's reference for the concept being pitched was 'high-end Tool' (field notes, 29 May 2018). However, the body language of the band suggested that this reference to the California-based progressive rock band Tool did not work, and it may have instead just emphasised the age difference between Jefferton and myself and the band. Essentially, the meeting was organised to ensure that the band liked Jefferton and that they got along well before they committed to working with him. During the meeting, however, the band's manager noted that they were behind schedule and needed to organise the photoshoot that was required to realise the concept as soon as possible. This was because, as aforementioned, the band had come to Jefferton after working with another visual designer whose commissioned work they ended up not wanting to use.

The band stated that, following their experience with the previous designer, they wanted more input into the design process. Jefferton responded by saying, 'I am here to facilitate your vision', and that he views himself 'as a facilitator and will work collaboratively with you' (field notes, 29 May 2018). He noted that he is not a 'task master' (field notes, 29 May 2018). My understanding of this interaction was that Jefferton was not so much saying that he would be subservient to them, but that together they would operate with a 'flat' hierarchical structure.

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[11]For reasons of confidentiality, the band's name will not be used here. Suffice to say that at the time they were signed to a mid-sized record label and were an up-and-coming Sydney band with a growing international audience.

   The ideas in the mood board that Jefferton pitched were discussed and then the band's manager got out his laptop in order to discuss the ideas that they themselves had drafted. The two laptops sat side by side on the table and the colour schemes and ideas were compared. We all concluded that the band and Jefferton were on the same page. The meeting ended with light banter concerning plans for that evening. The two parties said their goodbyes and we went our separate ways.

   Unfortunately, however, although Jefferton did design the album cover that was used, as well as a separate single cover, during the process of designing the packaging for the album, the relationship broke down and the two parties agreed to go their separate ways. This was due to Jefferton feeling micromanaged by the band and feeling overworked due to the large number of iterations of the design(s) that were requested. Under the 'fee for service' deal agreed for designing the album cover, this meant that Jefferton kept the 50% deposit for the job, though we did not invoice for the balance of his fee. The layered Photoshop files were handed over to the band so that they could finish the job, or they could hire someone else to.

3.7   The Lifespan of Design Collaborations

Designers who create content for musicians are often prone to self-exploitation (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, p. 221). One reason for this self-exploitation is their anxiety concerning future work. Designers such as Jefferton James often quote lower than they otherwise would because they want to build a long-term relationship with the client. This relates to relationship cycles within the music business. It often also stems from the fact that lower profile artists for the most part cannot afford to pay designers very much. Jefferton used the following wave pool analogy to explain this:

> One job for someone small could ripple through to someone slightly bigger in the industry and that ripples through to someone slightly bigger and slightly bigger. And then sometimes it ripples back to someone smaller and starting out who has liked your work for a couple of years, or heard your name and wants to see if they can get you on board. And then they evolve into something bigger. And then there's another kind of side ripple to that where you start opening up gates to different genres of music. (Interview 1)

Exploitation and self-exploitation can occur when a lower profile musician convinces the designer to work for a low (and sometimes non-existent) fee on the often-implicit promise of future work when they have more funding. Designers also often 'low ball' themselves during their own fee negotiations in an attempt to get a musician or band to remain loyal. However, this is often misguided, as Jefferton explained:

> It can hurt on a certain level if they go up the music industry rung a little bit and then they kind of leave you behind. But again it's a business and the higher up you go, the more opinions are being thrown in there and the money men [sic] or middle management will say, 'That's cool that you've worked with this person but we really want you to work with this person that we like.' So yeah, there is a certain amount of loyalty but the more voices that are heard, it's harder for that artist to remain loyal to you. (Interview 1)

While Jefferton posited here that this lack of loyalty is caused by the politics that arise if a musician or band of musicians becomes more commercially successful, there are also other reasons for disloyalty that can be identified here:

1. The social psychology of bands can make sustaining such collaborations difficult.
2. Musicians often choose to work with new visual design collaborators because they are trying to visually represent an innovative new direction in their music.

In terms of the first point, that the social psychology of bands can make sustaining such collaborations difficult, in my earlier work (Morrow 2018a), I engaged with Sawyer's (2012) notion of group flow, which refers to the highly enjoyable psychological state that members of a group are in together when they are creating at the top of their collective ability, to explain the lifespan of collaborative teams such as bands. Applying this concept here involves arguing that musicians may not want to continue a collaboration with a designer simply because it is no longer challenging or fun: 'When group flow fades away, the group usually breaks up because its members want to find new challenges elsewhere' (Sawyer 2007, p. 52). The poignancy of this element of social psychology is encapsulated in the following Instagram post the band The Lumineers made when cellist Neyla Pekarek left the band: 'Every band is like an organism—it continually grows, changes and evolves. These changes aren't always easy but are an unavoidable part of life' (Lumineers 2018).

Designers who collaborate with musicians and bands are also subject to the tendency for creativity to lead to disloyalty within groups because any collaboration has a lifespan (see Morrow 2018a, p. 4), and often even more so because they are not actually in the band.

In relation to the second point introduced above, that musicians often choose to work with new visual design collaborators because they are trying to visually represent an innovative new direction in their music, Sydney-based Australian musician Josh Pyke[12] noted:

> I don't want every record to be the same. So for instance, I did *Feeding the wolves* and *Memories and dust* with James [James Gulliver Hancock] and then I felt like I was going in a different direction musically and so I used different artists for *Chimneys a'fire* and that was a much more crafty kind of paper cut, that was Anna Van Least. And then after that I had another idea which I thought suited James's aesthetic again so I went back to James. And then *But for all these shrinking hearts* I had a different visual idea that I wanted to use. (Interview 4)

Artists such as Josh Pyke change their visual identity from album to album by collaborating with different designers. In contrast to this approach, the research conducted for this book uncovered numerous examples of bands that have maintained consistency in how they are visually represented by working with the same designer or visual artist throughout their career. One such example is the band Radiohead with their collaboration with visual artist Stanley Donwood. A case study of Radiohead's,

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[12]Josh Pyke is a multi-Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) award-winning Australian singer–songwriter. He has released five studio albums to date (Pyke 2019).

and specifically their lead singer Thome Yorke's, collaboration with Donwood is explored in a case study in Chap. 7 of this book.

Discussing these two different approaches, Sydney and New York-based Australian artist manager and record label executive, John Watson (Eleven Music), noted that the collaboration between Stanley Donwood and Radiohead dovetails into the prog (progressive) rock tradition:

> That's coming straight out of Hipgnosis who did all the [Pink] Floyd stuff, all the Genesis stuff. You know, Yes always had that other guy who did all of those illustrations which are very identifiable Yes artwork. Radiohead kind of fit more into that broad tradition. I always loved the way Oasis did that … very signature, very clean, very strong and I love that when you get a thread going through a career, I think it's great. But … artists that want more change they fit more into The Beatles part of the rock family tree where it's all about progress, change and reinvention. (Interview 6)

For Watson, The Beatles were 'sending a message of trailblazingness, of innovation … who's the leaders of the pack' (Interview 6) whereas:

> In the instance of a Radiohead you're wanting to say we exist over here on this island. We exist on Radiohead Island. No one else is on our island. We don't really care where everybody else is. If you'd like to come and spend some time with us come to our island … both of those are completely defined propositions for an audience. (Interview 6)

The following case study of Jefferton James's work with and for Australian musician Dustin Tebbutt provides an example of the consistency that can be achieved when a musician works with the one visual creative throughout multiple release cycles.

3.8   Case Study: Jefferton James and Dustin Tebbutt

Dustin Tebbutt is an Australian singer–songwriter in the neo-folk genre. The design culture surrounding his music was originally informed by the story of the recording of his debut EP. This story is encapsulated in the following quotation from his website: 'Dustin Tebbutt's acclaimed debut solo recording—"The Breach"—set blogs and triple j alight on release and his story of creating the bleak epic during the depths of a Scandinavian winter captured imaginations everywhere' (Tebbutt 2019). This case study concerns the way in which this story was used to create the design culture surrounding Dustin Tebbutt's music.

Since the release of his debut EP, Dustin Tebbutt has achieved success within the music streaming economy. According to his website, his album *First light* propelled his monthly Spotify listeners to 'over 1.5 million with his songs accumulating an astounding 200 + million streams to date' (Tebbutt 2019). Tracks such as 'Love is blind', 'Satellite' and 'All your love' from his 2018 *Chasing gold* EP 'have so far amassed over 4.6 million streams and counting' (Tebbutt 2019). However, Tebbutt is an example of a contemporary musician whose recorded music is highly streamed, but whose ticket sales for his live music events are relatively low. His manager, John

Watson, discussing Tebbutt's profile in relation to the Australian heritage artists he also manages, Cold Chisel and Midnight Oil, noted:

> Within our own roster, Dustin Tebbutt is easily our best streaming artist, but he can barely sell out the Oxford Art Factory [capacity 500] whereas Midnight Oil and Cold Chisel because they skew older and for lots of other reasons relating to new music and the way your own playlist behaviour grows over time and a lot of other variables—they will vastly out sell Dustin, ticket wise. (Watson, as cited in Morrow and Beckett 2019, pp. 65–66)

Tebbutt's success on services such as Spotify, and his relatively low ticket sales, means that the majority of consumers engage with his music online. In this digital context, Dustin Tebbutt is an example of an artist who has achieved design culture consistency. Similar to Radiohead and the other artists who fit within the prog rock tradition discussed above, Dustin has achieved consistency across his first three EPs and his debut album partly by working with the same designer, Jefferton James, and partly because as a musician he has a very clear concept of how he wants his design culture to look and feel.

The following section uses the visual research method of displaying Tebbutt's first three EP cover designs along with his debut album cover design and other components of his design culture. These images are accompanied by interview data featuring Jefferton James's explanation of his creative processes and an outline of the labour that was involved in producing the various artefacts displayed. This section is therefore designed to function as a 'research encounter' (Pink 2015, p. 95) that sheds light on Jefferton James's experiences. As such, the approach taken here is in line with the aforementioned rethinking of participant observation as it pays 'particular attention to the multisensory and emplaced aspects of other people's (and the researcher's own) experience' (p. 95). This section therefore reframes ethnography as a 'participatory practice in which learning is embodied, emplaced, sensorial and empathetic, rather than observational' (p. 95).

In response to a question concerning Tebbutt's story of creating his debut EP *The breach* during the depths of a Scandinavian winter and the extent to which this concept informed the creation of his overall design culture, Jefferton James noted:

> Very much so, it's been a through line up until recently … if you look at all the album art it's all related to a very removed mountain scape; sprawling mountains imagery. Everything ties into essentially mountains … There's abstract mountains, there's torn bits of paper mountains, but everything comes back to that original concept. He wanted it to feel very mountainesque because obviously when he was writing it in that Scandinavian environment he wanted to continue that throughout. (Interview 20)

Discussing the first design Dustin Tebbutt commissioned him to create, a gig poster (see Fig. 3.4), Jefferton posited:

> I had originally done work for Dustin for a gig poster and I guess that was my 'audition' piece for him and that was very much a collage art piece. It was mainly the Mountain Head (surprise, surprise, mountain). But from there when he was talking about the EP he wanted to keep the mountain thing going but have it very abstract. And at the time I was doing very

Fig. 3.4 Gig poster concept for Dustin Tebbutt. *Copyright Jefferton James*

wink, wink, nudge, nudge, jokey imagery … very kind of Monty Python, Terry Gilliam-esque sense of humour through my imagery and he wanted to steer away from that, have it more abstract. (Interview 20)

In an interview, Jefferton discussed his work designing the cover for Dustin's debut EP *The breach* (Fig. 3.5):

So the process with Dustin Tebbutt was completely different to how I work with most people where it was me being almost like an actor doing multiple takes of the same thing.

So I'd start off with this mountain concept and I'd say, 'What about this?' He'd be like, 'No, no, it's too …' it's either too literal or it's too far away. And it involved this constant rebounding, spitballing of ideas, and I think it ended up being 30 or 40 concepts that I sent through for Dustin. Like with most things with Dustin it was on my 'off time' that I came up with the concept for *The breach*. I was watching a documentary about a chalk artist, as you do.

And she was doing these amazing pictures but just with chalk on a chalkboard. I thought, 'That's really interesting.' And so I was doodling some mountain images and I put them into scan and I was putting them through Photoshop and I'd accidentally hit invert and by inverting the image and making a black and white image it made it look very much like a chalk drawing and I was like, 'That's kind of really interesting.' So I played with that a little bit.

And so I looked at it and from a graphic point of view it was quite interesting but it was still too literal. So what I did was I started playing with the kind of recurring patterns that you see in nature. I started giving it this kaleidoscopic effect and I thought in nature you can get a natural kaleidoscopic effect. When you see an image reflected in a lake it gives you that kind of natural kaleidos-isational (that's not a word) but anyway it gives you a natural kaleidoscope.

So the idea behind that was mirroring the image like fourfold by using, I used one mountain scape, mirrored it along the horizon line and then flipped it vertically and implied that it was a lake setting and that's how you get this kind of natural organic kaleidoscopic effect. And once I sent that through that seemed to really resonate with Dustin and the ping ponging of ideas ended and we just really refined that one, getting the tones and the hues and everything just right. And yeah, then that one was the lock and that was used for the tour poster and it was used for merch and shirts and whatever. (Interview 20) (Fig. 3.6)

Jefferton also discussed his work designing the cover for Dustin's second EP *Bones* (Fig. 3.7):

Bones was very similar whereby he wanted to keep the mountains theme going but he wanted it to be abstract and didn't want it to feel like it's *The breach part 2*. So I started playing with very bright images. At the time I was using very cultural primary colours … and that was way too far off.

And yeah it was another 20, 30 ideas that just didn't resonate and then it was me again taking time off with my son Jack and we were doing watercolours and he had ripped up little bits of paper and one of them had slightly submerged in the watercolour paint palette and it seeped in and made it look a little bit like an iceberg or that natural blue colouring in white snow that you get from natural light.

And I was like, 'That looks really interesting.' And then I compiled them together, these torn bits of paper, and then dipped the edges into the watercolours, photographed them, manipulated them a little bit and then sent that through as my kind of torn paper mountain range. And that really resonated with Dustin.

And then, funnily enough, we went through a process of 20 or 30 different shades of white that we could go with. Dustin has a very keen eye so when we had finally locked it, he was like, 'Can you transfer this to the tour poster?' I'd done it and to transfer the white ideas for the eye dropper tool and I clicked on the wrong bar. It was a slightly different shade of white and Dustin had emailed back saying, 'It's the wrong colour white. It's the wrong

Fig. 3.6 Shrink-wrapped
copies of Dustin Tebbutt's
Debut EP *The breach.*
Copyright Dustin Tebbutt

Fig. 3.7 Cover design for
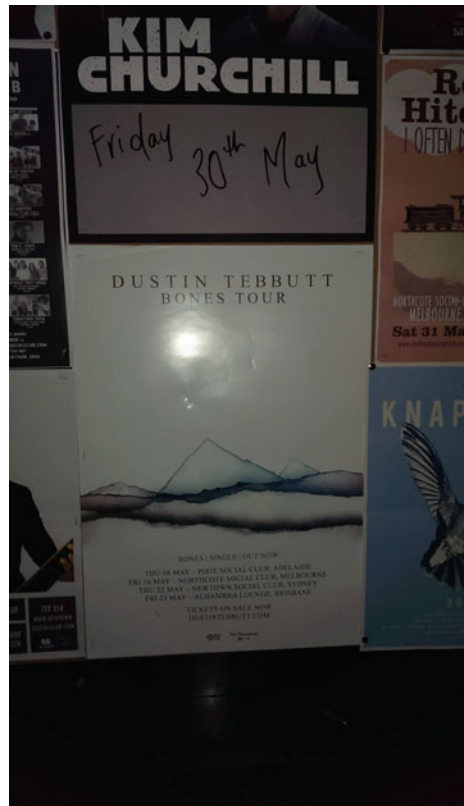Dustin Tebbutt's second EP
Bones. Copyright Dustin
Tebbutt
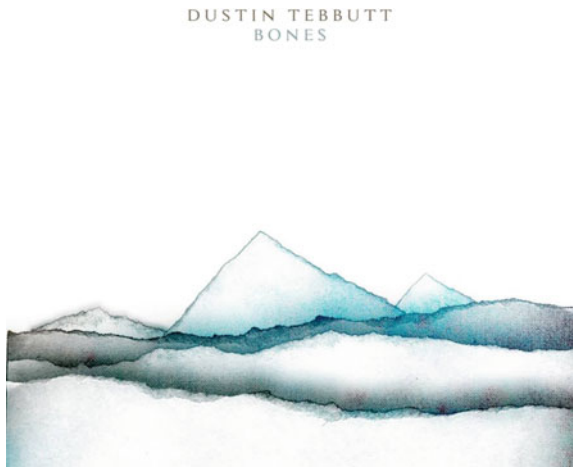
colour white.' So he is so attuned to exactly what he wants that he can pinpoint if it's not the
exact colour temperature of white that he wanted. So it's good working with an artist who
is that visually attuned to what he wants, but it also can be a bit crap because then you end
up with 30 or 40 emails. But it's also amazing to have someone who cares that deeply about
the image being put out. (Interview 20) (Figs. 3.8 and 3.9)

In the interview, Jefferton also discussed his work designing the cover for Dustin's
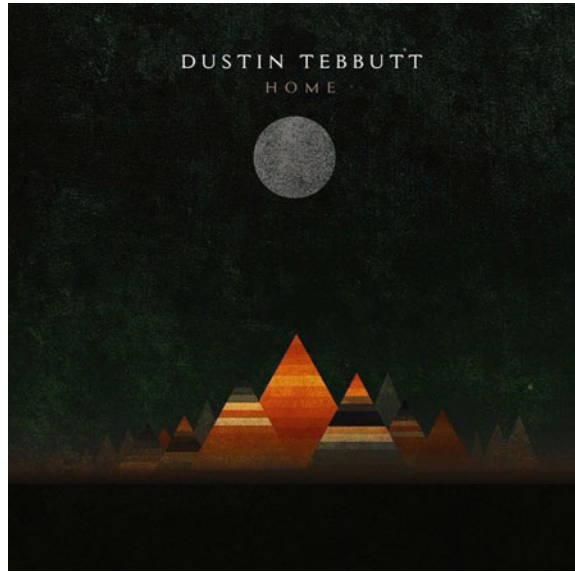third EP *Home* (Fig. 3.10):

Fig. 3.8 Single cover design
for Dustin Tebbutt's single
Bones. Copyright Dustin
Tebbutt

Fig. 3.9 Tour poster for
Dustin Tebbutt's *Bones* tour.
Copyright Dustin Tebbutt

Fig. 3.10 Cover design for Dustin Tebbutt's third EP *Home.* Copyright Dustin Tebbutt

Home continued on the mountain tradition. For that design he was like, 'Let's go super abstract.' And we talked about which artists we really like and one artist he really liked was Paul Klee and so I did a lot of research on Paul Klee and I found recurring colour tones that he used … I put together a graded Paul Klee colour palette and sent that through rather than an image to Dustin and he was like, 'Yeah, these are the colour tones we should be sticking with.'

Paul Klee also uses some very strong geometric images so I wanted to essentially look at a mountain like it's a bunch of huge geometric shapes. The weird inspiration, apart from Paul Klee on that, was bad PlayStation graphics. So I was looking at mountains like they were like bad polygon graphics. So I was breaking mountains down into huge polygon shapes and then I reduced the polygons down into triangles. And that's essentially where we got that image from. It was breaking down a mountain range into their most basic shapes and then putting it in this very Paul Klee-esque world.

But also with *Home* there was constant rebounding because he had something very different in mind. And for the album as well he had something very different in mind at the outset, but then we got to somewhere that was very different from the last two but still in tune with them as well. (Interview 20)

Jefferton discussed his work designing the cover for Dustin's debut album *First light* (Fig. 3.11):

This is probably the most literal thing that he had sent me. So he wanted to get off mountains even though we essentially went back to mountains for the cover. But he wanted to initially get away from mountains and he was thinking more literally and he wanted to have the cover represent the birth of the universe, almost the beginning of time.

So I played with a lot of imagery using old-style maps and that wasn't really landing. He was doing all these very basic starburst images and at one point I was breaking down the beginning of time into almost looking like a stained-glass window. But then that felt a little

Fig. 3.11 Cover design for Dustin Tebbutt's Debut Album *First light.* Copyright Dustin Tebbutt

bit too religious. And it was constant back and forth-ing trying to get the beginning of time just right.

And for some reason I was thinking about the Terrence Malick movie *Tree of life* where he does the progression of time in this, like, 15-minute montage. But he used existing locations to represent the beginning of time. So I thought, 'What if I make it earthbound?'

I thought of a kind of alien, untouched landscape that I could use, but have it looking up at the night sky. And again it was from watching a documentary, an Ansel Adams documentary. And he's shot this very famous photograph in New Mexico at dusk but he had held the shutter open long enough for him to get the natural sunlight coming across the New Mexico plain but you could also see a lot of the star fields in the sky. I was like, 'Well that's really interesting.' So I used a very stark desert landscape that had this very clear untouched sky above it. And sent that through to Dustin and it instantly landed. He was like, even though we were headed back to mountains, it's using the two ideas—the beginning of time plus the mountains idea from the previous album.

So yeah, that's how we landed on *First light* but again that was many, many dozens of emails. Probably the most I've back and forth-ed with Dustin for any of the work because we were kind of stuck in this beginning of time mindset for so long and we wouldn't budge from it. But when we did and we factored in a new idea with the pre-existing idea it really works.

He said that it feels like a classic album cover … it could be an album cover that would be in your dad's album collection. And for me nowadays that's how I try to measure success here because if it feels like something that you could stumble across and it's existed for years … it feels a little bit timeless. (Interview 20)

In the interview, Jefferton discussed his work stage designing a live performance set that formed part of the design culture stemming from the mountain-themed EP cover designs. The photograph in Fig. 3.12 shows the set design that was used for the tour that accompanied the release of Dustin Tebbutt's second EP *Bones* (Fig. 3.7):

Fig. 3.12 Set design for Dustin Tebbutt's tour promoting second EP *Bones*. Copyright Dustin Tebbutt

So he was like, 'Can we have something again mountains but something that's different to what we already have existing?' [The idea was to have] four or five really famous mountains all form together to make this one kind of mega mountain.

So I stitched together half a dozen mountains to make a mega mountain that I dubbed 'Frankenmountain'. And yeah, again that really resonated with him. (Interview 20)

3.9 Conclusion

Album cover design provided a useful starting point for this book because it is usually this particular design object that musicians and bands start with. Following the design of their album cover, they then attempt to develop the networks and relationships between the various other domains of design practice that form their overall design culture. Design culture is a useful concept here for understanding the interrelationships between album cover designs and the multiple people who are engaged in their shaping and functioning, and the extent to which these design concepts in turn inform the design of gig posters, stage designs, music videos, merchandise and XR products.

This chapter has served to introduce the scholarly possibilities of linking design culture studies with the field of music business research. This study of design within the contemporary music business involves moving beyond solely regarding design as contributing to the marketing and promotion of music, and the singular design objects that are used for this end, towards an understanding that design in this context also includes the orchestration of networks of multiple design objects, people and

actions. This rethinking of design in this context may also require the music business itself to be redesigned.

Julier and Munch (2019) noted that 'design defines itself in relation to its contexts that are—in the contemporary economic and social circumstances—always on the move, so too is design' (p. 5). The ever-shifting boundaries and porosity of what design involves within the music business has implications for the economics of music and for the related deal making. As I outlined in this chapter, the main sources of tension within the album cover design culture network are definitions of art and understandings of creative/aesthetic autonomy that stem from these definitions.

Historically, it has arguably been convenient for the music business to label a creative labourer such as Jefferton James a 'designer' and not an 'artist'—and the output of their labour a 'design' and not an 'artwork'—because otherwise the way in which the music business functions economically and legally would have to be redesigned. A key question here then becomes: will this change as musicians increasingly create more of their design objects themselves? While the work of a 'designer' such as Jefferton can be managed on a fee-for-service basis with a complete assignment of copyright to the musician or label that has commissioned the work, the linear flow of this type of deal (designer designs for the musician/label who then own the design object) gives way to a more complex, multilinear ecology when the musician (the 'named' artist) is also the designer/artist.

As the domain of album cover design shifts and morphs in the post-digital environment, a grey area is emerging relating to the issue of attribution for design, or lack thereof, as was the case with The Clash poster that was on display at the aforementioned NGV exhibition. The extent to which such design objects will be labelled art from the outset, rather than just retrospectively as they were at the 2018 NGV exhibition, will also arguably be in flux. And in this context, while musicians who design their own album covers may be able to negotiate better deals because their name remains attached to the product and they have a direct relationship with the audience, there is also arguably a need for commissioned 'designers' to receive better deals.

As was evidenced by Jefferton James's work for Dustin Tebbutt, visual design can be fundamentally important for a project, but it is often not remunerated as such. While I do not have permission to disclose how much Jefferton was paid by Dustin on a fee-for-service basis, suffice to say here that an ongoing royalty relative to the number of streams of the music that Jefferton's body of (dare I say) artworks accompanies would obviously put Jefferton in a better financial position. His fee was modest relative to what he contributed to the Tebbutt project. In many, but not all, countries performing rights/neighbouring rights income from recordings is shared between record companies and recording artists (usually 50/50) (see Osborne 2014, p. 574) and the recording artists' share is often split between 'featured' artists and 'non-featured' artists such as session musicians and singers (Osborne 2014, p. 578; see also Stahl 2012). It is arguably time for a similar arrangement for be negotiated for visual designers—be they 'non-featured' commissioned designers, or the musicians themselves if they design their own album cover.

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